

## Questions to think about and discuss after reading “Come on, Wagon”

by Zenna Henderson [http://print.ditd.org/Academy/Come\\_On\\_Wagon.pdf](http://print.ditd.org/Academy/Come_On_Wagon.pdf)

1. Why did Thaddeus “outgrow” his telekinetic abilities? What role did the adult characters play in this “growth”?
2. The following lines from the story form a very clear message:
  - “Every time you teach a kid something, you teach him a hundred things that are impossible because that one thing is so.” (1)
  - “Adolescence ends lots more than it begins.”(1)
  - “I prayed silently, Don’t let him be too old. O God, don’t let him be too old.” (6)What point is the author making with these statements?
3. Explain the irony in the line near the end of the story when Thaddeus says: “But I can’t! You can’t just make a tractor do something. You gotta run it.”
4. Why does the narrator say he doesn’t like kids? Does his behavior in the story support that declaration or not?
5. The third paragraph on page three talks about a “side trip to the South Pacific where even I learned that there are some grown-up impossibilities that are not always absolute.” What does this mean and why does it matter?
6. After Clyde’s death, the narrator says, “Thaddeus started to bawl, not from grief but bewilderment. He knew I was put out with him, and he didn’t know why.” What do you think about this statement? Do you think Thaddeus knew or didn’t know what the narrator wanted of him?
7. The characters in “Come on, Wagon” appear to have different ideas about conformity. How do each of the following characters seem to feel about conformity vs exceptionality?
  - The narrator
  - Jean (the mother)
  - The grandfather
  - Thaddeus when he’s younger
  - Thaddeus when he’s older
8. What do you think was the author’s intention or main message regarding conformity?
9. How does this piece of semi-sci fi fiction relate to what we’ve been considering about wonder and knowledge and childhood...about the thoughts of Rachel Carson, Wendell Berry, Mark Twain, Lewis Thomas...among others?